

The ABC's Spot Removal

The BASICS -

1. Try to determine what the spot is – use the L-A-S-T formula.
LOOK
ASK
SMELL
TOUCH – Notice we didn't ask you to TASTE the spot - good reason for that!!
2. Get to it quickly if possible. Don't use a hair dryer or other 'hot' items to dry the spot before you have attempted to clean it. Your chances of getting the spot out are much higher if the spot has not 'set'.
3. Soak up as much of the liquid as possible by blotting (always use a clean white terry cloth type rag if possible). Always work from the outside edges of the stain toward the inside to avoid spreading the stain. Scrape up any solids and dispose of them accordingly.
4. Always test any spot cleaning chemical in a discreet area such as a closet to insure that the chemical will not discolor the carpet. Apply the chemical, again working from the outside in. Do not scrub, brush lightly if need to loosen the stain. Pre-treating (letting the chemical penetrate the stain) may be necessary to loosen the stain.
5. Water still remains the best solvent. Rinse the area with water (don't flood it!) and blot it dry with a clean white terry cloth rag. A 'wicking' process may be helpful to get more of the 'wetness' out of a thicker carpet. To do this, put a clean white terry cloth towel over the area and apply weight (bricks, books etc.) to the area and leave it for a few hours. The excess moisture will 'wick' up into the towel.
6. **Never, Never, Never** – did I mention **never** use a bleach product of any kind on a carpeted area – it is simply not worth the risk! Hydrogen peroxide, diluted dish soap, white vinegar and a paste made of laundry detergent (did I mention **never** use a bleach product) are good pre-treatments and spot cleaners. A sponge or soft bristle brush will help loosen the stain. On more thing – **NEVER** use a bleach product!!

The SPECIFICS -

Alcohol/Beer – Being able to hold your liquor is one thing - not spilling it is another! Soak up all you with a sponge or a clean white rag by blotting. Soak with a mild detergent solution or a small amount of vinegar in water. Blot, rinse with clean water and blot. It may be necessary to use Hydrogen peroxide to get any excess alcohol out. Rinse and blot.

Blood – OK, you not only spilled your beer, you dropped the glass and broke it, stepped on it trying to clean up the beer - now you have blood to clean up too. Blot up all you can, using cold water – remember, work from the outside in to avoid spreading the stain. Rinse with clear ammonia or Hydrogen peroxide, rinse with cold water, blot. Old blood stains? Let them soak with salt water or Hydrogen peroxide before following the steps above.

Coffee – and who hasn't spilled their coffee before? Using a mild detergent solution blot the area, rinse with water then blot with vinegar or Hydrogen peroxide. If you like sugar in your coffee this stain may be a little more stubborn. Stains like this often continue to 'wick' up to the surface so it may take several attempts to get rid of this one.

Cigarette burns – It's your house, you can smoke there if you want - just don't burn the carpet! If it's a small burn try trimming off the burnt ends of the carpet fiber or rub them with steel wool. Vacuum that up then use a little detergent solution, rinse and blot. If it's a bigger spot, use a cup or bowl large enough to cover the spot, cut out the spot then go to an inconspicuous place (a closet) and cut out a piece of good carpet to replace the damaged carpet. If it is a really big spot – move the couch to cover it and hope she doesn't notice!

Chocolate – If it's really good chocolate, you might want to try the lick method - I'm not sure it's worth the carpet fuzz, dog hair and who knows what that other thing you got in you mouth was. So, try this. Scrape off what you can (don't eat it!), blot with mild detergent solution, use a sponge or soft brush to loosen the stain, blot and rinse. Here is the best solution. Chocolate is always worth eating – don't drop any of it!

Dairy Products – I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream. Or milk or creamer. Use a sponge and a mild detergent solution, rinse, rinse again and let it dry. Rinsing is very important to remove all the stain so it doesn't smell like soured milk. Nobody likes that!

Greasy Food – Oh man, you dropped the chicken fried steak and the fried potatoes on the carpet? You better stick with chips! Pick up what you can, use a mild detergent solution with hot water and a sponge. Rinse with hot water – use Hydrogen peroxide if necessary, and be more careful!

Gum – So you were using that gum to try to quit smoking, exhaled, blew the gum across the room then squashed it out like a cigarette. Bad habits die slow! Your best bet, spend some \$\$ and buy some gum freeze from the janitor supply company. Too cheap to spend the \$\$, use some dry ice or regular ice to freeze the gum until it's hard and brittle. Break it up, clean it up, then use a little Hydrogen peroxide or dry cleaning solution if necessary. Like your mom told you, "Gum stays in your mouth".

Grass – The kind in the front yard, not the kind you smoke! Try a sponge and water first. If that doesn't work use a mild detergent solution or Hydrogen peroxide, rinse and blot. You could leave your shoes outside!

Ink – This only works for ballpoint ink - who uses fountain pens anyway? You might have to try several things so the best bet is, don't get ink on anything! First try some detergent solution and a sponge, rinse blot and see what's left. Next, use some cheap hair spray – it won't work with expensive hair spray so this time it's OK to be cheap. Saturate the spot and blot. Next, try alcohol, acetone or nail polish that's not oily. If the spot turns yellow, use some rust remover. Sometimes the cure is worse than the problem!

Mildew – Yuck, why would there be mildew there anyway? Brush away as much possible, vacuum it up, then use clear ammonia or a disinfectant and a sponge. Try a little Hydrogen peroxide if needed and blot. If you keep that clean there won't be any mildew there!

Mustard – If it's Grey Poupon, have your butler clean it up. If not, you should have been using Mayo! Scrape it up, careful not to spread it (like you were trying to do when you dropped it), use a detergent solution and a sponge, rinse with white vinegar, rinse and blot. Hydrogen peroxide might help.